A Short History of the Palmarian Catholic Church in New Zealand.

By mid-1980, word had spread amongst Traditional Catholics in Auckland about Palmer de Troya or the Palmarian Catholic Church. As Sister of Mercy gave a fellow religious a newspaper cutting from an Irish publication about the events in Palmer. Sister Peter Claver RSM (Alma Dryland) flew to Spain at the end of that year. She had been in correspondence with Fr Stanislaus who was a priest in the order. He was an Australian but left due to illness. She was the very first New Zealander to enter the Order of The Carmelites of the Holy Face. She walked out of her convent in Takapuna, Auckland with just a bag and went to live for a short period on the family farm.

Before leaving for Spain, Alma gave the newspaper clipping to her Aunt and Uncle, Ivan and Christine Wedding as well as her sister and brother in-law Valerie and Frank Kerrigan. They in turn spread the message to Edward and Patricia Hall. They had met at the Tridentine Mass offered by a retired Marist priest.

By 1981- the following New Zealander's were Palmarian:

*Valerie and Frank Kerrigan and some of the children

*The Choate Family of Wellington

*Doris and Maiava Smith and a son

* Susie Lelio, Samoan living in Auckland

*A Samoan family living in Wellington (Name Unknown)

*Patricia and Edward Hall and daughter Maria who entered the convent.

*Roger and Paul Dryland of Hamilton. (Roger later left)

*Mrs Alma Dryland Snr. Later canonized

*Mrs Black of Northcote, Auckland who went to Spain

(Name in religion was *Mother Carman.* Later canonized. Died 1993)

*Ivan and Christina Wedding, both later canonized.

*Sharon, a Samoan living in Auckland last name and year of conversion unknown.

Eddie Hall wrote to Pope Gregory XVII requesting a priest be sent to offer Mass. Fr Josephat, an Irishman who had been a Capuchin brother until 1975 would visit New Zealand, Samoa and Australia twice a year. Mr. and Mrs. Hall purchased a Protestant church in New Lynn, Auckland. Prayers were said there by the Palmarian's on Sundays. Maria Hall taught the catechism to the youngsters. Mr. and Mrs. Hall later moved to Takapuna, Auckland and established a chapel in their new home. Eddie Hall liaised with the Department of Internal Affairs so that the church was properly recognized in law. By 1983 the Hall's wanted to move to Hamilton a two-hour drive from Auckland. Property was cheaper and there were more Palmarians. They purchased a block of three flats. One for themselves, one for Christina Wedding and one functioned as a chapel. Doris and Maiava Smith maintained a small home prayer chapel at their residence at Ponsonby, Auckland. All-night vigils were held there also. It wasn't all smooth

sailing. In 1982 *Truth Newspaper,* a scandal rag, published an article about the Palmarian Catholic Church claiming it was a cult and split families.

In 1988 the Pope and his entourage visited New Zealand. They stayed at The Sheraton and travelled to Hamilton most days by car. However, by 1992 some of the faithful were discontented. Maria Hall came back from Spain burnt out, disillusioned and with a plethora of complaints. She wrote a book and appeared on local television. Mr. Hall told Fr Josephat on his next visit that they had lost faith in the Palmarian Catholic Church for several reasons. The Blessed Sacrament was removed. Witnesses say Mr Hall's face 'fell' and Maria's eyes were 'popping out of her head.' Sadly, Mother Maria Salud/Alma Dryland returned to her home country also burnt-out but remained a Palmarian until her death in 2021. As of 2024 just two Palmarians remain in New Zealand.

<u>Clergy Who Served The Church In New Zealand.</u>

Fr Josephat 1981-1993 *Canonized*
Fr Joshua 1993-1996 *Apostatized*
Fr Calixto 1996-2002 *Left over the Palmarian Bible*
Fr Lucas2003-? *Abandoned the Priesthood*
Fr Gerontio *Serving 2024*